

MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2005

Frederick Campus

MEMBERS PRESENT: Benjamin Bahan, Ph.D.; Cynthia Neese-Bailes, PhD.; David S. Birnbaum; John Ertel, Ph.D.; H. Mitchell Goldberg; Sandra N. Harriman; Robin Kittleman; Charles E. Poyer, Jr.; Barbara Raimondo; David A. Severn, Esq.; Carol Stevens; Laurie Yaffe.

MEMBERS ABSENT: William J. Bowman; Anjali Desai-Margolin; Edgar B. Palmer; Elliot Rosen.

INTERPRETERS: Roberta Quinn; Brenda Kelly-Frey.

President Raimondo called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. Roll call was called by passing around the roll call sheet.

President's Report:

President Raimondo gave the Board members an overview of the upcoming Board retreat. It was explained that the Board evaluation would be discussed at the retreat and that all self-evaluations were due today.

The President shared with everyone that the Personnel committee had met and reviewed the Superintendent's goals for the 2005 – 2006 school year. Ms. Raimondo explained that further discussion on the topic would take place under Old Business. The President told the BOT members that she and Ms. Carol Stevens had attended the latest meeting of the Unity and Diversity Committee and they would share thoughts on their work later in the day.

President Raimondo explained that the CEASD summit took place in August in Delaware. The summit was held to provide guidance to, and receive input from, schools for the Deaf in regards to the No Child Left Behind act (NCLB). The U.S. Dept. of Education is now allowing some flexibility in the implementation of this law. While this relieves pressure on schools, there is a fear that some schools will become more lax in their improvement efforts. Superintendent Tucker explained that there are still some unanswered questions regarding how NCLB applies to special schools and therefore, he continues to meet quarterly with Dr. Carol Ann Baglin of the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE). One of the topics of discussion with MSDE is that of alternate assessments held to modified achievement standards for our special needs children. Superintendent Tucker is asking for clarification from MSDE on the subject of school improvement as we have been informed that special schools such as MSD are not included in this program.

Vice President Report:

No Report

Secretary's Report:

No report

Treasurer's Report:

Former Treasurer, Mitch Goldberg, reported in the Treasurer's absence. Mr. Goldberg informed the members of the Board that the Foundation had done as directed and sold stock to increase the BOT's cash reserve. The retreat will cost approximately \$5,000.00.

Quorum was reached at 9:58 a.m. A discussion regarding the agenda was held. President Raimondo asked that two items be added to the agenda for this meeting. The first item would be added in Old Business – Discussion of Open Forum responses and procedures and the second item would be under New Business - a motion from the Personnel Committee regarding a Policy Advisory Committee.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the agenda with the two additions discussed – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

A **MOTION** was made to approve the August 26, 2005 minutes – **SECONDED, PASSED.**

A **MOTION** was made to approve the minutes of the June, 2005 Executive Committee meeting – **SECONDED, PASSED.**

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Tucker shared with the Board that the budget proposal for fiscal year '07 has passed through the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Our \$1.5 million dollar increase was approved. Our request will go to the legislature for approval in January or February.

Mr. Tucker also informed the Board that the Capital improvements are on target. Members of the management team as well as members of the MSD community have and continue to meet with the architects. The final drawings will be presented in a few weeks. The plans show that all the departments housed in the new building on the Frederick Campus will be connected under one roof. The School's planned improvements were mentioned on the front page of the Frederick News Post.

The Superintendent shared that the enrollment at the school is down from last year. The graduating class of 2005 was very large and not all of the vacancies created by their departure have been filled yet.

Mr. Tucker announced that a new Assistant Attorney General has been chosen for MSD. Ms. Demetria Titus will join the team on November 28, 2005.

Superintendent Tucker shared that the school has entered into a contract with the University of Baltimore to conduct the focus group meetings which will be a follow up to responses from the Accreditation Survey conducted last year. The goal of the focus groups is to explore the difference between responses given by African-American hearing parents and white deaf parents.

Mr. Tucker informed the BOT members that a consultant has been chosen to conduct the evaluation of the Orioles Management Team. The Ivy Consultant Group has won the bid to perform this task for MSD. The contract calls for completion to take place in 45 days from the start date.

The Board members were informed of a \$41,000.00 bequest that was left to the Columbia Campus. The Myrtle Crawford Memorial Fund has been established and will be managed by the MSD Foundation. Interest earned from this investment will be used to pay for camp and college scholarships given to Columbia Campus students. The staff on the Columbia Campus will advertise the camp scholarship opportunities as well as directions on how to apply, to all Columbia Campus parents/guardians.

Mr. Tucker explained that the CEASD members who attended the Summit in Delaware are working on a Growth Model as an alternative to the AMO numbers used currently. As things are set up now, many schools don't get credit for significant improvement if they don't meet their arbitrarily chosen AMO goal.

Executive Committee Report:

No Report

Education Committee Report:

The Committee has discussed revising the submission schedule and process for handbook changes. It is recommended that handbook changes be provided to the committee one month prior to the quarterly meeting. The committee is also suggesting that an advisory panel comprised of community members be established. The details will be discussed under new business.

Fiscal Matters/Facilities Management Committee:

Mr. Goldberg will meet with the Operations Manager for MSD to get the update on the new facilities.

Personnel Committee Report:

Chairperson Severn shared with the Board members that the committee had met with Superintendent Tucker regarding the 2005-2006 school year goals. Further information on this topic is scheduled for later in the meeting.

Student Life Committee:

Mr. Palmer was not in attendance at the meeting but President Raimondo stated that she met with Chairperson Palmer and he supports the Advisory Panel proposal.

Trusteeship Committee:

Chairperson Harriman explained that there are currently three vacancies on the BOT. The Trusteeship Committee is in need of recommendations for possible candidates to fill these vacancies. The Board's needs must be examined when looking at resumes. Anyone who knows of a potential candidate should send their names and a short biography to Sandy Harriman.

Ms. Harriman announced that Mr. Elliot Rosen has joined the Trusteeship Committee as he is involved in the Board evaluation process.

Membership training will take place at the Board retreat.

Accreditation Committee:

Ms. Carol Stevens attended the most recent Unity and Diversity meeting and shared with the Board the issues this committee is facing. The U and D committee deals with all the grey issues at the school. Issues such as hearing/deaf relations, Frederick /Columbia relations, financial/social/economic relations and the needs of students with additional disabilities and how this impacts the MSD community are discussed. Most of these are sensitive subjects for the participants and therefore, the meetings are often emotionally charged. Board member Stevens reported that the committee members feel overwhelmed and have requested a consultant be hired to help direct the group and set the parameters for the meetings. One of the objectives for the consultant would be to provide a safe environment where committee members can feel safe sharing opinions without fear of retribution.

A discussion was held regarding the best way the Board could help/support the Unity and Diversity Committee. It was discussed that hiring a consultant in this fiscal year would add an additional unexpected expense to the budget. Further, this process may have to go through the State procurement process in which case we would work through the Department of Budget and Management. A discussion was held regarding the State Procurement process.

The Board of Trustees recognizes and supports the work being done by the Unity and Diversity Committee, therefore, A **MOTION** was made to ask the school to provide the resources the U. and D. Committee needs to move forward. The amount of money spent to support the group will be at the Superintendent's discretion **SECONDED – PASSED**. Laurie Yaffe, Board representative on the Unity and Diversity Committee, was asked to bring the message back to the Committee that the Board supports their work.

Adequate Yearly Progress Presentation (AYP) – James E. Tucker

Mr. Chad Baker, Director of Student Achievement and Results, was unable to attend the BOT meeting therefore, the presentation on the schools AYP was done by Superintendent Tucker.

Maryland school assessments began in 2003 so the school now has three years of data to analyze. There are several sub-groups for every school. The greatest improvement in test scores has taken place in the Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) sub-group on the Columbia Campus. This year, the white student sub-group in Columbia did not meet the AYP goal therefore, the school was listed as failing to meet its goal. These results, once published, are reviewed by Mr. Baker and members in his department for accuracy. We have had to ask for corrections already as some of our students were incorrectly categorized as hearing. At this time, it appears that MSD did not meet its goals as set by MSDE this year but the tests show significant improvement in the areas of math and reading and the scores continue to improve yearly. Mr. Tucker explained that the NCLB law is making schools accountable for all the sub-groups present in the school. While the spirit of the law is good and it has helped MSD identify weaknesses, test fairness is still an issue under review.

Evidence shows that students who learned ASL before the age of four did better on the reading test than children who learned ASL at a later age. Our Life Based Education

students count in the school's overall test scores and many of those children learned ASL after the age of four.

Board members shared with Mr. Tucker that they are very impressed with the test score improvements made by MSD students.

Open Forum:

Ms. Risa Lewis stood before the Board at 1:02 p.m. Ms. Lewis explained that she had been asked to speak on behalf of the Frederick Campus elementary school parents (a group of 20 – 25 parents). They recently met and outlined several concerns they wanted to bring to the BOT's attention:

1. "There is a lack of close supervision of our children both in, but mostly out of the classroom. Children are picking on each other. We don't want our children picking on each other or suffering in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in the restrooms, on the playground, or in their specials classes."
2. "The lower elementary school does not provide a welcoming and friendly environment for parents to visit and observe."
3. "The lower school administration and staff can and should do a better job of communicating with parents."
4. "Ms. Lally and the staff have not interpreted or adequately interpreted the Frederick County school curriculum – and there is no document outlining our philosophy for how we approach teaching and learning."

Ms. Lewis provided the Board members with a letter prepared by a committee of parents listing their concerns.

Two students, James Cornish and Zachary Ennis, presented themselves before the BOT to request a change in school policy. Currently, movies which are rated R are not allowed to be viewed on school property. The students would like to recommend that this policy be altered. They recommended that a special room be designated to show R rated movies on campus once per week. The children between the ages of 17 and 18 would be allowed to view the movies with parental permission and children over the age of 18 could view them without parental permission. This is in keeping with the State standard at the movie theaters. They suggested that the movies could be pre-viewed and approved by Student Life Staff

President Raimondo thanked them for their presentation and explained that their recommendation would be reviewed by the Student Life Committee and if passed, would be incorporated in next year's Parent/Student handbook.

Old Business –

The Personnel Committee explained that they had met to discuss the draft of the Superintendent's goals for the 2005/2006 school year. The committee recommends the approval of the goals with two amendments.

10 will now state that the Superintendent will "Ensure that development funds are appropriately allocated and used for regular administrative and teaching staff training and professional enhancement."

#11 now states that the Superintendent will "Develop a clear development plan for

Principals and Assistant Principals and put in place the beginning of succession planning for the planned retirements in the next five years.”

A **MOTION** was made to approve the Superintendent goals as amended – SECONDED – PASSED.

New Business –

The Education Committee members shared with the full Board that they would like to see a new procedure for policy development and approval.

They recommend that a portion of the annual recommended changes be sent to the Committees for review and approval in January and that the second part would be sent for review and approval in April.

Further, they recommend that the Education and Student Life Committee set up an advisory committee to review the policy recommendations.

A **MOTION** was made to accept the Education Committee’s recommendation regarding handbook changes and the establishment of an advisory committee – SECONDED – PASSED.

President Raimondo shared a response letter she drafted to a past presenter at Open Forum. She requested Board input on the letter. A discussion was held regarding Board follow-up to Open Forum issues.

It was decided that the Education Committee would respond to the letter from the parent group. The letter will be clear that the parents were heard and that follow up will take place.

A **MOTION** was made that time be allotted on the agenda in the future for Board discussion of Open Forum issues SECONDED – PASSED.

Superintendent Tucker gave a brief update on the anti-bullying efforts at the school. He shared that the consultant, Jack Gilbert, is conducting interviews and a survey of children and staff on both campuses. He will provide the school with his findings and recommendations when he has finished.

The mandatory bullying report the school must file with MSDE is due on January 31st.

Mr. Tucker explained that the Frederick Campus is investigating the possibility of using the PBIS program being recommended by MSDE. The program rewards good behavior rather than reinforcing bad behavior. The Columbia Campus has a strong behavior modification program so they will not be participating in the PBIS program.

A discussion was held regarding the student’s request for a change in the movie policy. Mr. Tucker explained that the current policy does allow for the showing of R rated movies as long as the Principal’s permission has been obtained. For the remainder of the 2005/2006 school year the Superintendent will ask that the Principal delegate that authority to the Dean of Students so more R rated movies can be shown to students on campus.

The Superintendent will have a discussion with the AAG to verify the age of consent information.

The meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anjali Desai-Margolin
Secretary